



Northern California Wilderness Bill Approved by Energy Committee

February 16, 2005

Washington, DC – The Northern California Coastal Wild Heritage Wilderness Act, introduced by Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein (both D-Calif.) and sponsored in the House by Rep. Mike Thompson (D-Napa Valley), was approved by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee today.

“With many of our wildlands vanishing, we need to preserve what remains,” Senator Feinstein said. **“I am pleased to be a part of this effort to permanently preserve 300,000 acres along California's northern coast including the King Range, one of California's most striking and beautiful environmental jewels. My thanks go to Senator Boxer and Representative Thompson for their leadership on this issue and to the members of the committee for moving this bill forward.”**

“This bill protects the natural beauty that is at the heart of California's identity,” Senator Boxer said. **“Last year, we were able to pass this bill in the Senate. This year, we must work to make this bill law. I would like to thank the many wonderful people of California who helped with this great community effort and I also thank Senator Feinstein and Congressman Mike Thompson for their leadership on this issue.”**

“This bill has broad support and is gaining critical momentum,” Rep. Thompson said. **“It will protect some of California's most treasured lands for many future generations to come. Senators Boxer and Feinstein have demonstrated great vision and leadership in guiding it through the Senate.”**

The bill would designate over 300,000 acres of public land in Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, Mendocino, and Napa counties as wilderness. It would also designate the Black Butte River in Mendocino County as a wild and scenic river. However, the legislation will not close any existing legal roads, nor will it affect any private lands or alter any grazing rights.

The bill is strongly supported by the administration of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger (R-Calif.). In a letter to House Resources Committee Chairman Richard Pombo (R-Tracy), Mike Chrisman, Secretary for Resources under Governor Schwarzenegger, wrote, **“The State of California strongly supports this proposed legislation that will permanently protect over 300,000 acres in Northern California for their wilderness values.”**

The sponsors of the bill have worked with the Bush Administration, Senator Larry Craig (R-Idaho) and Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.) to address any concerns about the legislation. During the 108th Session of Congress, the Senate passed the bill by unanimous consent.

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